

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for performing a category search to identify categories of items that relate to a search term, the method comprising:

receiving at least one search term, wherein the search term includes at least one search term word;

comparing the search term with a hierarchy of category identifiers to determine whether matches exist, wherein comparing the search term with the hierarchy of category identifiers includes comparing the search term word with one or more words in the hierarchy of category identifiers;

identifying at least one matching category identifier based on the matches that are determined to exist between the search term word and the words of the hierarchy of category identifiers;

comparing the search term word with terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist, wherein the terms related to one or more categories include a name and a description of a web site corresponding to a category;

identifying at least one matching category identifier based on the matches that are determined to exist between the search term word and the terms related to one or more categories; [[and]]

displaying the at least one matching category identifier identifiers ; and
when more than one matching category identifier is identified and displayed, presenting the category identifiers with an indication of relative rank determined based on a number of the matches that are determined to exist and at least one of locations and types of the matches for each respective matching category identifier.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein:

receiving at least one search term comprises:

receiving several search terms, and

grouping the search terms received as a single string;

comparing the search term with the hierarchy of category identifiers comprises comparing the single string of search terms with the hierarchy of category identifiers to determine whether matches exist; and

comparing the search term with the terms related to one or more categories comprise comparing the single string of search terms with the terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist.

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the hierarchy of category identifiers comprises an ordered list of category names arranged in order from broad categories to narrow categories with the narrowest category being a final category name.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein displaying at least a category identifier includes communicating at least a category identifier based on the matches that are determined to exist with the hierarchy and the terms.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein displaying at least a category identifier includes displaying several category identifiers, the method further comprising ranking the category identifiers based on a number of the matches that are determined to exist and at least one of locations and types of the matches.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein ranking the category identifiers based on the location of the matches includes ranking the category identifiers based on the relative location of the matches within the hierarchy of category identifiers.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of claim 6[[],] wherein the ranking the category identifiers based on the types of the matches includes ranking the category identifiers based on whether the matches occur with at least one of the terms related to one or more categories or with the hierarchy of category identifiers.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 8 wherein category identifiers that include matches that occur with both the hierarchy of category identifiers and the terms related to one or more categories are ranked higher than category identifiers that include matches that occur with only one of the hierarchy of category identifiers and the terms related to one or more categories.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein category identifiers that include matches that occur with more than one type are ranked higher than category identifiers that include matches that occur within only one of the types.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein category identifiers that include matches that occur with the hierarchy of category identifiers are ranked higher than category identifiers that include matches that occur with the terms related to one or more categories.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the hierarchy of category identifiers comprises an ordered list of category names arranged in order from broad categories to narrow categories with the narrowest category being a final category name such that category identifiers that include matches that occur with the final category name of the hierarchy of category names are ranked higher than category names that include matches that occur at a location other than the final category name.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the items comprise web sites.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A method for performing a search to identify items and categories of items that relate to a search term, the method comprising:

receiving at least one search term;

comparing the search term with a list of recommended items to determine whether matches exist;

accessing a list of previously received search terms stored in an electronic data store that were used to perform searches;

comparing the search term with the list to determine whether matches exist between the search term and the list of previously received search terms;

comparing the search term with a hierarchy of category identifiers and terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist; and

displaying results based on matches that are determined to exist, wherein:

the matches between the search term and the list of previously received search terms are displayed as a list of related search terms that were entered for previously performed searches, and

the matches between the search term and the list of recommended items are displayed as a list of recommended web sites that are identifiably designated as recommended web sites.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 14 further comprising comparing the search term with an electronic information store that includes full text of different web pages from different web sites to determine whether matches exist.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 15 wherein receiving at least one search term comprises:

receiving several search terms; and
grouping the search terms received as a single string.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 15 wherein the items comprise web sites and displaying results comprises displaying a list of recommended sites, a list of related searches, a list of category identifiers, and a list of web site identifiers.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 15 further comprising conducting a world wide web search using the search term when less than a threshold number of matches occurs.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 18 further comprising conducting a search of an electronic information store that includes full text of proprietary content.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 14 wherein the items comprise web sites.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium for performing a category search to identify categories of items that relate to a search term, comprising instructions for:

receiving at least one search term, wherein the search term includes at least one search term word;

comparing the search term with a hierarchy of category identifiers to determine whether matches exist, wherein comparing the search term with the hierarchy of category identifiers includes comparing the search term word with one or more words in the hierarchy of category identifiers;

identifying at least one matching category identifier based on the matches that are determined to exist between the search term word and the words of the hierarchy of category identifiers;

comparing the search term word with terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist, wherein the terms related to one or more categories include a name and a description of a web site corresponding to a category;

identifying at least one matching category identifier based on the matches that are determined to exist between the search term word and the terms related to one or more categories; [[and]]

displaying the at least one matching category identifier identifiers; and
when more than one matching category identifier is identified and displayed, presenting
the matching category identifiers based on a number of the matches that are determined to exist
and at least one of locations and types of the matches for each respective matching category
identifier.

Claim 22 (original): The computer program of claim 21 wherein the computer readable medium comprises a propagated signal.

Claim 23 (original): The computer program of claim 22 wherein the propagated signal comprises a carrier wave.

Claim 24 (canceled).

Claim 25 (previously presented): A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium for performing a search to identify web sites and categories of web sites that relate to a search term, comprising instructions for:

receiving at least one search term;

comparing the search term with a list of recommended web sites to determine whether matches exist;

accessing a list of previously received search terms stored in an electronic data store that were used to perform searches;

comparing the search term with the list to determine whether matches exist between the search term and the list of previously received search terms;

comparing the search term with a hierarchy of category identifiers and terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist; and

displaying results based on matches that are determined to exist, wherein:

the matches between the search term and the list of previously received search terms are displayed as a list of related search terms that were entered for previously performed searches, and

the matches between the search term and the list of recommended items are displayed as a list of recommended web sites that are identifiably designated as recommended web sites.

Claim 26 (original): The computer program of claim 25 wherein the computer readable medium comprises a propagated signal.

Claim 27 (original): The computer program of claim 26 wherein the propagated signal comprises a carrier wave.

Claim 28 (original): The computer program of claim 27 further comprising instructions for comparing the search term with an electronic information store that includes full text of different web pages from different web sites to determine whether matches exist.

Claim 29 (original): The computer program of claim 28 wherein the instructions for receiving at least one search term comprise instructions for:

receiving several search terms; and

grouping the search terms received as a single string.

Claim 30 (original): The computer program of claim 28 wherein the instructions for displaying results comprises instructions for displaying a list of recommended sites, a list of related searches, a list of category identifiers, and a list of web site identifiers.

Claim 31 (original): The computer program of claim 28 further comprising instructions for conducting a world wide web search using the search term when less than a threshold

Claim 32 (original): The computer program of claim 31 further comprising instructions for conducting a search of an electronic information store that includes full text of proprietary content.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method of claim 14 wherein:
receiving at least one search term includes receiving at least one search term word; and
comparing the search term with the hierarchy of category identifiers includes comparing the search term word with one or more words in the hierarchy of category identifiers and comparing the search term word with the terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The computer program of claim 25 wherein:
the instructions for receiving at least one search term comprises instructions for receiving at least one search term word; and
the instructions for comparing the search term with the hierarchy of category identifiers includes instructions for comparing the search term word with one or more words in the hierarchy of category identifiers and comparing the search term word with the terms related to one or more categories to determine whether matches exist.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The method of claim 14 further comprising:

enabling a user to select one of the displayed related search terms from the list of related search terms; and

performing a search using the selected related search terms.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The computer program of claim 25 further comprising instructions for:

enabling a user to select one of the displayed related search terms from the list of related search terms; and

performing a search using the selected related search terms.

Claim 37 (new): The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the matching category identifiers with the indication of relative rank includes presenting the matching category identifiers in a visually sorted order.

Claim 38 (new): The computer program of claim 21 wherein the instructions for presenting the matching category identifiers with the indication of relative rank includes instructions for presenting the matching category identifiers in a visually sorted order.